

Special Edition

Friendship

Bishop Lai's Vow and Prayer

To start my first Bishop's Letter I have selected a greeting from Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, in the final verse of Chapter 13:

"The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

When my wife and I were packing for our move to the Diocesan Center in Taipei, I found a small piece of old and yellowed paper that I had put on top of my desk as my motto. It reminds me to "pray always to God, the Master of my life, as a means to fill me with joy, to give me the strength to help others in their suffering, and to always remain sincere, faithful and humble". As I looked at this paper saved so many years ago, I renewed the prayer that my dear Lord would help me, guide me and find me worthy of the tests He has prepared for me. Many of my friends, relatives and co-workers have known me for over 30 years. I don't know what they think of me, but I am certain that they all know that I am one who doesn't care what people think, but does care about how to be God's faithful servant.

God's Grace and God's Holy Spirit selected me to be the Bishop of Taiwan.

Therefore, with a humble and prayerful heart, I make my vow before God:

I am called to evangelize with all the Saints, to explain the Gospel,
and to be witness of God's mighty regency.
I am called to respect Jesus Christ as the King of Kings, the master of masters.
I am called to protect our faith and reconcile our faith with other denominations.
I am called to carry out the discipline of our Church and to be in charge of its sacraments.
I am called to ordain priests and deacons, and to consecrate bishops as a good shepherd of God's people.
I am called to share the responsibility of world Church leadership with other bishops.
As Bishop I accept the responsibility of maintaining historical tradition and rejoice in the joy of following Christ.

I believe that I have been called to be Bishop. I will accept this call, obey Christ, and perform the duties and responsibilities of this office in His name.

I will pray always, read the Bible, and let the example of Jesus Christ serve as my guide toward goodness.

This will I do with all my heart, and mind, and strength and through the help of God.

I will evangelize the Gospel, guide others to know our God and our religion, and work to strengthen their consciences.

This I will do through the help of God.

I will strive to strengthen and sustain all God's people; to help them to use the gifts they have received from the Holy Spirit in order to help them to do good works. I will serve as their pastor and intercessor and lead them in giving thanks to God during the sacraments.

This I will do through the help of God.

I will protect the faith, provide the discipline and bear the responsibilities of this office, all because of the mercy of Christ Jesus. I will administer the Church with its other bishops. I will support all its priests in their duties. I will guide and sustain its deacons and others serving in the Church.

This I will do through the help of God.

I will aid the poor and those without hope.

This I will do through God's mercy.

Heavenly Father, strengthen me always to love you and to love your people; make me worthy to care for your people, to be their pastor, and to feed the sheep of Jesus.

Help me to carry out perfectly the work to which I have been called.

Help me always to serve you by reconciling God and His people. Bless me and your people as I absolve their sins in the name of Jesus, as I present holy gifts to Jesus, and as I seek to guide our Church with wisdom in daily life and ministry.

Let your holy tenderness and sacred being shine through me to provide light to your people.

I accept that it is my responsibility as Bishop to guide all Church members with your holiness and tenderness as an offering worthy of honoring God.

I pledge this in the Name of Christ.

David Lai

I ask that those of you who have read this vow support me by praying for God's help and the intercession of all the Church in its fulfillment.

Together, let us be God's good soldiers, preach God's Gospel, and be witnesses of God's greatness. Let us join together to do this to convert more people to Jesus Christ and to bring increased vitality to God's Church.

Amen

On pages 2 and 3 of this issue Mr. Herbert Ma, Warden of St. John's Cathedral and Chancellor of the Diocese, and Bill Bryson, a leading member of the English speaking congregation at Good Shepherd, Shihlin, share their personal perspectives on the contributions of retired Bishop John Chien to the Church in Taiwan.

Bishop John Chien as a Person: A Brief Sketch

By Herbert H. P. Ma

Having served five bishops as Chancellor of the Diocese, I find it difficult to talk about any one of them without some comparison with the rest. This applies to a brief sketch of Bishop John Chien as a person.

Charles P. Gilson was the first bishop assigned to Taiwan by the American Church. A retired church treasurer from Shanghai, he respected the Chinese people and their culture. We jointly drafted the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese. However, as a suffragan bishop of the Diocese of Hawaii he could not do as much as he wanted. Bishop James Wang, the first Chinese bishop, was elected by the House of Bishops at the 1964 General Convention of the American Church, to which I was the lay delegate. A well-trained marine engineer from Hong Kong he ruled the church with authority and laid down the foundation of the church by making its first formal Constitution and Canons. James Pong, the scholarly archdeacon from Hongkong, was designated by Bishop Wang as his heir apparent and was duly elected by the Diocese. Bishop Pong succeeded in democratizing the church structure by amending the Constitution and Canons. Like his predecessor he chose his successor before he retired. P. Y. Cheung, his choice, was elected the fourth bishop of Taiwan by the Diocese. A long-time public servant and businessman, Bishop Cheung tried hard to balance democracy and authority in church affairs and revamped the Constitution and Canons to their present form.

Bishop John Chien, compared with those before him, is unique in many respects. Born and raised in Taiwan, he received his

general and theological education on this island. Ordained a priest of the Episcopal Church at the age of 26, he has had full ministry experience in this Diocese. Starting with smaller congregations in the south, he first served as rector of the Taipei Good Shepherd with a sizable Chinese and English congregations, and then Dean of the St. John's Cathedral in Taipei.

He was chosen one of the three candidates by a Diocesan Search and Nominating Committee for a new bishop without any external influence and elected the first bishop of Taiwan from among the local clergymen in 1988. Coming from a rural area and a farmer's family, he early learned the hardships of life and the value of being frugal. The fact that he was elected bishop by a democratic and competitive process has

inclined him to be tolerant and receptive of other's opinions. What's more, in administering church affairs he has had to deal with clergy and laymen who are mostly his peers or seniors. This has taught him to be humble and patient. Now, frugality, tolerance and patience are still virtues to be desired and had by many people including bishops. Bishop John Chien has them. I am privileged to have seen him grow, mature and assume leadership in the strengthening of inter-church relationships, the training of young clergy and especially the systemizing of church operation as reflected in the Constitution and Canons during his service as bishop.

We shall miss him after his retirement as bishop in July 2001. But we look forward to his continuing service to the Church in other capacities.



Bishop John

By Bill Bryson (with Elizabeth Sah)

For most of my life, I have found Bishops to be intimidating, imposing people with little time for rank and file church-goers. Most have spent so long on the administrative and political side of their job that they seem to have forgotten there is a pastoral side to being a bishop. While some have achieved great things, to the average lay person they are merely distant authority figures, no more accessible than the President of the United States or the Queen of England.

Not so Bishop John Chien. From the first moment that I met him in 1989, I recognized he was cut from a different cloth than most of the Bishops I had known before. I remember he greeted me warmly, he actually seemed pleased to see a new foreigner at Good Shepherd Church, and he showed a genuine interest in me and my family.

As years passed, I realized Bishop John sees foreigners as an integral part of the Diocese. The feeling of belonging is important to foreigners in Taiwan, particularly to those of us who are long-term expatriates, and Bishop Chien has always had time for expats and their opinions. He has also always proved ready to address the pastoral needs of foreigners in the Diocese, both as Bishop and as priest.

According to close friends, this probably derives from his personal history. John Chien is the first Taiwanese Bishop of Taiwan. He was born in Taiwan, educated in Taiwanese universities, and he became a Christian and began his priesthood in Taiwan. When he went to the Virginia Theological Seminary for graduate studies, he feared his English would not be good enough. Grace and the children stayed in Taiwan. He struggled with insecurity and loneliness, a heavy workload and no on-site familial support. He knows firsthand the pain and loneliness that even the most welcomed expat feels at times. And he knows the joy and security of being part of the family of God. Today he speaks of the warmth and care he received at the hands of Christian strangers during this period, and he returns that warmth and care to the expats of his Diocese.

As Rector of Good Shepherd, Bishop John insisted on the importance of the English and Chinese congregations holding a combined service once a month, a tradition which first attracted me to Good Shepherd Church and which has persisted through his numerous successors. When Good Shepherd Church lacked a priest, Bishop John agreed to serve as Interim Rector. Good Shepherd Church is not an easy Church to administer. Bishop John's suggestions and decisions always showed a pastoral concern for the congregation, and an appreciation of the unique nature of Good Shepherd Church and the rather quirky needs of its English-speaking congregation.

During Bishop John's tenure, he has given freely of himself to Christian organizations worldwide. He served as head of the Taiwan Council of Churches, the treasurer of the association of Anglican bishops in

Asia, and in the Province VIII and ECUSA Houses of Bishops. He attended two precedent-shattering Lambeth Conferences.

Bishop John's willingness to actively participate in the wider communion earned him love and friendship worldwide. The thousands of cards that arrive each Christmas is one testimonial to this. Another is the spontaneous arrival of gifts from around the world at the time of Taiwan's 9-21 earthquake. Large sums of money arrived from the Churches of the US, Great Britain and Japan. Small sums arrived from parishes and individuals worldwide, from Sunday School children whom he had visited, from church members he had entertained during their travels, from clergy and staff who had worked with and for the diocese, and from Christians he had met in various venues and activities. They all cared about Taiwan because they felt Bishop John cared about them.

In my experience, Bishop John's presence is one of healing even in the most contentious of discussions. I have held several leadership positions at Good Shepherd and have worked often with Bishop John. Many of the more difficult issues which I took to Bishop John as English Warden of Good Shepherd Church involved intrachurch conflicts. Bishop John was always available to meet on these issues, and his decisions were uniformly fair and motivated by the best interests of all concerned. He was always quick to remind participants that conflicts within the church should be addressed in a Christian manner and he always showed respect for, and genuine concern about, the opinions and feelings of those involved. Bishop John did not always make the "obvious" (and easy) decision; in retrospect, however, he always made the right one.

Any tribute to Bishop John would be incomplete without mention of his wife, Grace. Herself the daughter of a Presbyterian minister, she was the perfect wife and partner for Bishop John. Always aware, always warm and welcoming; many an ex-pat wife counts Grace as their first and best friend in Taiwan, and every English chaplain's wife who arrived during Bishop John's tenure confided in and leaned on her. For the Bishop, Grace has been his behind the scenes organizer, his joyous advocate and supporter, and his never failing friend and confidant. He has told close friends the most difficult times of his life were those when he and Grace were apart.

Bishop John is a kind, friendly man of faith whom God has chosen to vest with pastoral gifts and a loving heart. He now leaves organized ministry for the joys and ease of retirement; a retirement much-deserved and well-earned. He takes with him the best wishes and prayers of an entire Diocese. He leaves with us memories of a Bishop who put pastoral duties first. For expatriates in the Diocese, he leaves a legacy of including us in his deliberations about the future of the Diocese of Taiwan. For me, he will always be the Bishop who was different.



臺灣聖公會

TAIWAN
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH

7 Lane 105, Hangchow South Road, Section 1, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.

發行人：簡 啟 聰

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[http://www.dlms.org/
taiwan](http://www.dlms.org/taiwan)

Phone: 02-23411265

Fax: 02-23962014

Email: skhtpe@ms12.hinet.net



The Episcopal
Diocese of Taiwan

The Rt. Rev.
John C.T. Chien,
Bishop

The
Installation
of

The Right Reverend
David Lai

as

Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Taiwan

will take place at

Eight o'clock in the evening
Friday, August 24, 2001

at

St. John's
Cathedral,
Taipei,
Taiwan